GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1134
ANSWERED ON:08.02.2017
Indians Stranded in Gulf Countries
Kamal Nath Shri ;Scindia Shri Jyotiraditya Madhavrao;Thakur Shri Anurag Singh

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether a large number of Indian workers have been stranded in Gulf countries and are also languishing in various foreign jails for violation of labour contract rules and other petty complaints;

(b) if so, the details thereof, country-wise;

(c) whether Indian workers in Gulf countries have been allegedly cheated by companies in Gulf countries; and

(d) if so, the steps taken or proposed to be taken to break such nexus at State, Central and Mission levels to protect the Indian workers with number of prosecution held and those undergoing?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
[GEN. (DR) V. K. SINGH (RETD)]

(a) & (b) A statement showing the number of Indians who want to return form Gulf countries or are presently in jails in Gulf countries, as per the information available on MADAD portal, is at Annexure.

(c) & (d) Complaints are received from Indian emigrants in notified Emigration Check Required (ECR) countries, from time to time, regarding violation of contractual terms, adverse working conditions, wage related issues, employer related problems, medical and insurance related problems and compensation/death claims. Amidst the ongoing economic downturn in the Gulf countries due to fall in crude oil prices, there are some reports of Indian workers being asked to leave before completion of their existing contracts. Instances of unpaid salaries for last few months have also been reported.

Immediately on receipt of such complaints, the same are addressed by Indian Missions by taking them up with the concerned foreign authorities. In addition, the Government has taken several steps and initiatives to safeguard the interests of Indian nationals. Labour and Manpower Cooperation MoUs/Agreements are already in place with the six Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries, Jordan and Malaysia that provide the institutional framework to comprehensively discuss and review these matters. The Indian Community Welfare Fund (ICWF), aimed at assisting Overseas Indian nationals abroad in times of distress on a means tested basis in the most deserving cases, has already been extended to all Indian Missions and Posts abroad. The Indian Worker Resource Centre (IWRC) have also been setup that provide guidance and counseling on all matters pertaining to overseas Indian workers. IWRC, Dubai is already functional and four more IWRCs have been approved in Sharjah (UAE), Riyadh and Jeddah (Kingdom of Saudi Arabia) and Kuala Lumpur (Malaysia). Shelter homes for distressed Indian nationals have been setup in Bahrain, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Qatar, UAE and Malaysia. Missions in Gulf countries also conduct Open Houses on a regular basis where workers can convey their grievances. Some Missions have established 24x7 helplines and Toll Free helplines.

The MADAD portal enables the emigrant workers and their family members to register their consular grievances online and track their redressal. The multi-lingual 24X7 Helpline of Overseas Workers Resource Centre (OWRC) in Gurugram, Haryana provides information and guidance on all matters and problems pertaining to overseas employment of Indian nationals. Migrant Resource Centres have also been setup in Kochi, Hyderabad Gurugram, Chennai and Lucknow.

Grievances related to Overseas Employment in notified Emigration Check Required (ECR) countries, are logged in directly by emigrants/relatives/Overseas Workers Resource's Centre (OWRC) on eMigrate portal. These grievances are settled by respective jurisdictional Protectors of Emigrants (PoEs) as per laid down procedure.